

**Highlands Dolphins  
Aquatic Club  
Handbook  
(Updated March 2014)**



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# **Welcome**

Welcome to the Highlands Dolphins Aquatic Club! We are excited to have you and your family become part of our team. In this handbook you will find all the information you need about our team, its operations and policies. Please review the information thoroughly so that you know what is expected of everyone on the team. We look forward to getting to know you and your family and sharing the joys of swimming with you. We want to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to coach your children and be apart of their young lives. We look forward to helping them grow and develop as athletes and individuals in the years to come.

## *Mission Statement:*

*The Highlands Dolphins (HDAC) is a positive, energetic swim program designed to help swimmers achieve their personal best and nurture swimmers to give their best effort. Regular swim practices contribute to lifelong fitness skills.*

## **About the Coach**

Coach Zach Wolfe began swimming in high school and swam three years at Hillsdale High. He was the most dedicated swimmer his sophomore year and was also the team captain junior and senior year where he was also the MVP. He also played waterpolo senior year and was captain and MVP of that team as well. He swam for the College of San Mateo for one year swimming distance freestyle events like the 500 and the mile. He continues to compete in open water swims at the Masters level and also began doing triathlons and obstacle races. He began his coaching career in 2005 with the Mid-Peninsula Mariners. He coached the beginners group comprised mostly of kids ten and under. Zach was then given the opportunity to become the Boys Varsity Waterpolo Coach at Carlmont High School. When he started, the program was one of the worst in the league with only twelve boys on one team. In three short years the team had 35 boys on two teams and the Varsity team became Ocean Division Champions of the Peninsula Athletic League. The program is now one of the top in the league with many of the boys going on to play club waterpolo teams for their colleges.

## **Contact Information**

Coach Zach Wolfe – [swimmingwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:swimmingwolfe@yahoo.com)

Aquatics Supervisor Bryce Zuzack – [brycer@highlandsrec.ca.gov](mailto:brycer@highlandsrec.ca.gov)

Highlands Recreation Center Main Office – [admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov](mailto:admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov), 650-341-4251, [www.highlandsrec.ca.gov](http://www.highlandsrec.ca.gov)

# **General Information**

## **Team Communications**

Our primary means of communication between the board, coaching staff, and dolphin families is our Yahoo! Group. Please email [highlandsdolphins-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:highlandsdolphins-subscribe@yahogroups.com) to join the group. The Coach sends practice updates and schedule information through this email group. Coach Zach's email address is [swimmingwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:swimmingwolfe@yahoo.com).

## **Registration and Fees**

### **Swim Team Fees:**

Monthly fees are set by and paid directly to the Highlands Recreation Center. The monthly fee is the same every month; short months are not prorated. These fees cover the use of the pool and the coaches' salaries. For current fees and schedules visit [www.highlandsrec.ca.gov](http://www.highlandsrec.ca.gov). There is a \$25 late fee assessed for anyone who has not paid their fee by the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the new month so please pay your fees on time or use the automatic payment option. Even if your child only swims one day during the month you will be charged for the entire month's fee.

### **USA Swimming Fees:**

All dolphin members must be registered with USA Swimming in order to practice and participate in meets. You can choose to purchase an annual or seasonal membership, each season covers a different set of dates, and you must be registered when your child/children are swimming. The registration fee covers insurance for the entire team and allows your child to compete in swim meets when your child is ready. Registration will be renewed annual for annual memberships. The coach will ask for your renewal checks starting in October. For registration forms follow this link <http://www.pacswim.org/documents/forms/Registration-Membership>

## **Vacation and Holiday Breaks**

There will be no practices held on Federal Holidays: New Years Day; Martin Luther King Jr. Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; July 4<sup>th</sup>; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; Christmas Day. Also, there is one floating week for the coach's vacation that will be announced at least 2 months in advance. Sick days will be covered by assistant coach, or practice may be cancelled if the assistant coach is not available. There will also be one week where the pool will be closed, usually the first week of November, for the dome setup and there will be no practice. There will also be one week where the pool will be closed, usually the last week of March, for dome removal and maintenance. There will also be one week where the pool will be closed for Christmas. There will no practice during the above pool closures. None of these breaks or holidays will be prorated.

## Missing or Taking a Break from Swim Team

Unfortunately if you are unable to make it to practice there are no make-ups. If you decide to take a break from the swim team please email the Coach. If you wish to keep your spot on the swim team during your break you must continue to pay the monthly swim team dues. If you do not continue with payment we may not have space for you when you want to return to the team. Please email the coach in advance of your expected return in order to be added to the waitlist to help expedite this process and minimize your time on the waitlist. Always email the coach before you plan on returning.

In some cases when a swimmer takes a month or more off they may lose some of their conditioning and stamina. Every swimmer will be given a few weeks to get back into shape. In some cases the Coach may ask for that swimmer to practice with the group below until the swimmer is ready to for their previous group, i.e a child was on White group and took a break they may need to practice with the Red group until they build their swimming conditioning and technique back to where it was before they took a break.

## For the Parent

### Practices

Practices are essential for training swimmers in stroke technique, form, speed, and swim meet competition rules. Regular practice attendance is encouraged. Practices are NOT cancelled on account of rain, but will be cancelled in the event of thunder or visible lightning. When the dome is up, practices may be cancelled due to high winds.

### Expectations

- Both parents or guardians are on the team Yahoo group and receive the team emails.
- Please read all team emails thoroughly. The Coach spends a lot of time putting them together and there is a lot of important information in them. The coach will also do his best to keep them short and concise.
- Follow all the team policies listed in this handbook.
- Be supportive of your children. Tell them you are proud of them and offer praise.
- Let the coaches be the ones to offer critiques and feedback as well as race strategies.
- Please do not distract the swimmers or coach them during practice. We understand you may need to tell them that you will be in the parking lot or someone else will pick them up but please wait until an acceptable time to do so or ask the coach to relay this message. Anyone coaching their child during practice will be asked to leave.

- During meets please stay in the appropriate areas. Some areas, behind the starting blocks, are for coaches and swimmers only.
- Positive team talk at all time.
- Volunteer when able – USA Swimming is driven by volunteerism at every level. The swim meets are all volunteer based, the only entity that benefits from the swim meets are the teams themselves. Many USA Swimming teams require parents to volunteer for a set number of hours per year. We do not require such volunteerism however we do encourage all parents to volunteer in some way when able. There are several ways to volunteer:

## Volunteering and Team Service

In order to run an efficient swim club, parent involvement is necessary. Parent interest and reliability are the only qualifications for most jobs. Many teams require parents to volunteer for a set number of hours however we do not operate that way. We instead ask each parent to participate where they can. We appreciate your involvement and hope that you will find this a unique opportunity to be involved in a meaningful working relationship with the swimmers, coaches and other members of the team.

There are multiple ways to contribute your time, and we will work to find something that fits within your schedule. There are three levels of service: no experience required, some experience required, and training required. We will have designated area directors to help assign volunteers to specific tasks.

### **No experience required:**

1) Timers – we always need timers at our dual meets and on occasion for USA meets. Each timer is provided a stop watch and swimmers' times are recorded on the results sheets. Instructions on timing are provided at the beginning of every meet.

2) Runners – people to run results sheets back and forth to the “clerk of course” at meets we host.

3) Ribbon writers – we regularly fill out many ribbons per meet as rewards for swimmers' performance. An experienced writer will oversee. This occurs during the meet after each race.

4) Concessions – run the snack bar during home meets. This is an essential fundraising mechanism for the team. A concessions coordinator will oversee all volunteers.

5) Setup and cleanup – at home meets parents are essential to prepare the pool for the races. This requires about 45 minutes of setup before the meet. It's nice to have a separate group of parents to break everything down and clean up after the meet. Cleanup is required to continue holding meets at our pool. Clean up also takes about 45 minutes. Whenever possible, separate experienced coordinators for setup and cleanup will manage the volunteers.

### **Some Experience Required:**

- 1) Head Ribbon Writer – writes ribbons and oversees other ribbon writers.
- 2) Concessions Coordinator – make sure that we have everything necessary to run the snack bar, help set up snack bar and coordinate concessions volunteers at home meets.
- 3) Setup and Cleanup Coordinators – coordinate setup and cleanup volunteers. Know where things belong so they can be put in the proper place before and after home swim meets.

### **Minimal Training Required:**

- 1) Announcer/Starter – Announce events and start races at our home meets.
- 2) Officials – at our USA Swimming meets we are required to provide stroke and turn officials - the people in the white shirts you see at the end of the lanes at meets. You must complete a training session (four hours) and shadow officials at swim meets (on the job training) before you can become a certified official. Experienced stroke and turn officials can go on to train as starters and referees. Training and shadowing hours will be counted as volunteer hours after officiating at your third meet.

### **Communication with the Coach**

Please keep all communication with coach open, it is better to communicate too much than not enough. Communication can range from: your child being sick and not coming to practice, your taking a break for a month, you will no longer be swimming with HDAC, you have a question about something, etc. Email is preferred because the Coach can give you all his attention and fully answer your question. If you do have a quick question you can ask the Coach while he is on deck at practice but please keep it short. If you need or want to change practice groups please email the coach prior to contacting the office, they will need approval from the coach before they can transfer you.

### **Creating an Inclusive Environment**

One of our many goals is to give every swimmer the best chance at success and to create an environment where they can succeed. If your child has any special needs please inform the coach. We want to help your child the best way we can however if we are not aware of what is going on then we cannot make appropriate adjustments to meet your child's needs. Please be proactive with this information as opposed to reactive.

### **Bathrooms**

The bathrooms are not directly supervised by the highlands recreation center or the coach. All swimmers are expected to follow the facility rules while in the locker rooms. Please remind our swimmers to treat the facility with respect and also follow the rules.

# **For the Swimmer**

## **Practice Expectations**

- Attend only your designated practice time unless otherwise instructed by the coach.
- Unless the dome is up, use sunscreen preferably at home applied at least 20 min prior to practice.
- Positive team talk at all time.
- Racing suits last longer if you wear a training suit to practice, so please keep the nice suit at home and practice with the older suit.
- If your hair hangs past your shoulders you must wear a swim cap at practice to keep it from being in your face and mouth.
- Give your best effort every day on every lap.
- Listen and look at the coach when he is talking and giving instruction, please only listen when the coach is talking.
- Stay above the water after your finish a lap and stay out of other swimmers way when they are finishing their laps.
- Be in charge of your goggles, towel, swim suit (Your parents or guardians have a lot to do so help them out).
- Swimmers must commit to a high level of sportsmanship and conduct at all times.
- Be ready to swim 5 minutes before practice. This includes having your goggles and kickboard ready. Please do not ask the coach to fix your goggles at the start of practice, know how to use your equipment. Bring extra goggles just in case one pair breaks.
- Respect the facility. This means following the pool rules at all times. Be respectful of the facility and restrooms.
- Follow the facility rules while in the locker rooms. Treat the locker rooms with respect. Absolutely no vandalism or unsafe behavior in the locker room.
- Be sure to WEAR YOUR SMILE at all times!

## **Swim Suits and Equipment**

### **Swim Suits:**

We have team clothing available at [www.swimmerstuff.com](http://www.swimmerstuff.com); the team login is HDAC. Team suits and deck coats are available. Team suits and deck coats are not required. We recommend that every swimmer has a practice suit that they use just for practice and a racing/swim meet suit. The practice suit will stretch out and get worn down with use and should just be used for practice. The racing/swim meet suit should be a tight fit for optimal race results and only used at swim meets. Never wash a swim suit in the washing machine, it will destroy it. Simply rinse swim suits out under a faucet or in the shower and lay them flat to dry.



### Swim Caps:

Please follow the directions on the swim cap package to maximize its life. Swim caps should be dried thoroughly after use and I recommend flipping them inside out. You can also apply baby powder to the inside of the caps to remove excess moisture. Caps can last a year or more if taken care of properly or a month if they are not dried and stored properly.

### Discipline Policy

Unfortunately there are times where a swimmer may not follow the rules or expectations of the swim team. The majority of the time the kids will give several warnings or simply be asked to stop whatever they are doing. If there is a reoccurring problem or a major problem a swimmer may receive the below progressive disciplinary action.

First offense- warning (depending on the severity) or removal from practice

Second offense – removal from practice or a week suspension from the team

Third offense – one month suspension from the team

Fourth offense – expulsion from the team

### Moving Up/Promotions

The coach will make the decision on when to move kids up to the next group. The decision to move a swimmer to a higher/harder group depends on: the swimmers overall ability, the swimmers speed, the swimmers age and the swimmers ability to work hard.

We try to have every swim team group have kids around the same age. We find that kids of similar ages are also similar in their maturity and social interactions and similar discussion topics. Kids also train differently depending on their ages. To be fair to everyone and avoid a mix of younger and older kids on the team some kids may stay in a group until they reach the appropriate age for the next group.

### Star Patches

Upon graduation from one group to the next each swimmer will receive a star patch and certificate for their achievement. Swimmers are encouraged to put their patches on their deck coats or swim backpacks to show everyone what group they are on.

## **Swim Meet Section**

### Swim Meets and Competition

Swim Meets are an integral part of the competitive swim team experience. The benefits of swim meets are endless, from developing self-confidence, setting and achieving goals, learning to overcome defeat, and having fun are just some of the many benefits.

Swimmers are allowed to take as much time as they need until they are ready to compete, although many swimmers will be ready for competition within 3 months of

joining the team. All swimmers are encouraged to participate however it is up to the swimmer and parent when to start competing in meets.

Races are swum by gender and age groups. The groups are 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12 and 13 & over.

### Summer League Meets

Summer league meets are held on weekday afternoons/evenings. Warm ups usually begin between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. and run for two to three hours. These meets are free, but require significant parent volunteer work. Swimmers are not disqualified unless they are both a top finisher AND do something blatantly wrong, such as swimming the wrong stroke. There are no ribbons or medals given out at these meets

### USA Swimming Meets

USA swim meets are generally Saturdays and Sundays with younger swimmers swimming in the morning (usually starting around 7:00 a.m. or 7:30 a.m.) and older swimmers in the afternoon (usually starting between 11:30 and 1:00). Some meets have Friday afternoon sessions for distance events. Registration is required for these meets along with a small fee. Swimmers will follow USA Swimming rules for their races and may be disqualified (DQ'd). One of our mottos is to learn from our mistakes so DQ's are an opportunity to learn and succeed the next time. Within the age groups there are also separate division based on time achievement. These divisions are listed as C, B, and A. Each child will start in the C division until they achieve a B time, then they will swim in the B division and so on. The top 8 swimmers in each division will be awarded with ribbons.

For complete meet information please review the Meet 101 and Meet Check In documents available on our website or from the coach.

## Meet Guidelines for Swimmers and Parents

### **What to Bring**

- Plenty of towels - 2 to 5 depending on weather conditions and the number of events.
- Warm clothing.
- Chairs or blankets to sit on.
- Cooler for fruit, juices, water, snacks, etc.
- Snacks (a snack bar will usually be available during meets).
- Visors, sunglasses, team T-shirt, team cap and team suit.
- Sun block, especially for nose and shoulders.
- Cards and games to play with team mates (Please no iPhones or anything similar, thanks!)

## **At the Meet**

- If you can arrive at the meet early to stake out a "team area" (preferably with some shade) that's helpful!
- Check in for your races and with your coach when you arrive.
- Swimmers should stay close to team area. Listen for your event and be ready to go. Parents - please know where your swimmer is at all times. If you are working the meet please arrange for another parent to watch out for your child.
- It is ultimately the swimmer's responsibility to get to the blocks on time.
- At USA meets, swimmers should check in with their coach before and after every event.
- Make sure you check with the coach before you leave the meet, you may be on a relay!
- Please use trash cans for your garbage and help clean up after every swim meet. We are a clean team!
- You MUST have FUN!

## **Websites and Smartphone Apps**

Ome.swimconnection.com

Ome.swimconnection.com is the site used for swim meet registration. It is recommended you make a free account. You can view all meet information at this site as well as setup email notifications for when meets open. You can also view your swimmers best times.

Pacific Swimming

[www.pacswim.org](http://www.pacswim.org)

Pacific swimming is our local swim committee and geographically covers the area from Redding to Reno to Fresno. On their website you can find a wealth of information including but not limited to: meet information; time standards; meet results and meet registration info.

USA Swimming

[www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

USA Swimming is a national organization that governs all aspects of swimming, from youth swimming all the way to the Olympic team. There is a lot of great information available on this site from information about nutrition, your swimmers swim meet time history, safe sport information and the USA Swimming app Deck Pass. Please take a moment and explore this website.

Team Website

[www.highlandsdolphins.com](http://www.highlandsdolphins.com)

This is our team website. You can find new updates about the team, view the meet calendar, and view the team records.

#### Deck Pass

The official USA Swimming app. This is a great app for our swimmers. You can track all of your swimmers times in all their events, get up to date meet information right on your phone, swimmers can earn badges for their accomplishments and connect with other swimmers on your team.

#### Meet Mobile

This app lets you get your swimmers heat and lane assignments and race results at many of the swim meets we attend.

Thank you again for choosing the Highlands Dolphins Aquatic Club as your child's sports team! We are excited to have you become part of our family. We are also honored to be an integral part of your lives and son/daughter's development into a well rounded person with high moral values, self confidence and a good work ethic.

## **Highlands Dolphins New Member Checklist**

Name:

Date:

- ☐ Reviewed Parent/Swimmer Handbook with signatures
- ☐ Registered with main office
- ☐ Signed Waiver
- ☐ Swim Cap
- ☐ USA Swimming Registration Information
- ☐ Joined HDAC Yahoo Group
- ☐ Reviewed Swimmer/Parent Expectations
- ☐ Team Gear Order Form
- ☐ Explain Importance of Volunteerism In Sport
- ☐ Swim Meet 101 Info
- ☐ Helping at Swim Meets
- ☐ Discussed when we are ready to compete in swim meets
- ☐ Developing Independence
- ☐ Deck Pass
- ☐ Emergency Contact Info Card

We have reviewed all the information in the handbook. We agree to all the team policies and guidelines stated in this handbook.

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Swimmer Name	Swimmer Signature	Date

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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date

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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date